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ABSTRACT

To discover common concerns and areas of joint effort and actions of churches and community colleges is the purpose of this study. This preliminary report covers the first two phases of the study: recruitment and planning and educational. Participants were representatives from churches and community colleges from six areas of New York and Connecticut who used a case study approach. The actual case studies were used to raise questions of values and personal relationships as well as administrative decisions. After general discussion, college and church personnel from the same community met to explore their specific situations. (RS)

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PRELIMINARY REPORT

ON

COMMUNITY COLLEGE-CHURCH PROJECT

OF THE

CHURCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT

AND

COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

JC 730 083

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

MAY 11 1973

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

In his lengthy study of The Church, The University And Social Policy, Kenneth Underwood devotes but a little space to the community college. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that there has been little activity on the part of the churches with community colleges. However, Underwood has posed the question which the churches must seek to answer:

> "The rapid expansion of these (community) colleges now confronts the churches with the question of whether there is a primary ministry that a small staff of professional clergy can perform in them which is integral to both the colleges and the local churches and therefore supportable....by faculty, students and local parishes." (p. 155)

The New York Connecticut Community College-Church Project, jointly sponsored by United Ministries in Higher Education and Community College Institute at Columbia to explore this area of community college and local church relationship, or as the original proposal stated, "to explore how persons of the churches and community colleges might discover the points where their common concerns and actions intersect and where their efforts can be joined." An important part of the project is the discovery of what, as Underwood puts it, is "integral to both the college and the local churches." The intent is to discover whether there are points of intersection which do not do violence to the integrity of either of the institutions. In fact, given the state-related nature of the community colleges, these movements of intersection, if they exist, must obviously not do violence to the concept which separates institutions from support of any organized religion.

The project is divided into five phases:

I. Recruitment and Planning
II. Educational - Regarding Community Colleges and Churches
III. Planning of Projects
IV. Implementation of Projects
V. Evaluation

This is a report on the first two phases of this project. One of the purposes of these two phases was to introduce persons from these two different institutions to each other and to the other's institution. While it has been the intent of the project to discover information regarding points of intersection of concerns and action of the community colleges and churches, it has also been the intent of the project to provide to the participants assistance in their own work and understanding of themselves.

The participants are a representative from a community college and a representative from a local church in the general area of each community college. In all, twelve persons from the area of six community colleges have been involved. The colleges are:

In New York
- North Country Community College
- Westchester County Community College
- Rockland County Community College
- Suffolk County Community College

In Connecticut
- Hartford Community College
- Mattatuck Community College

These colleges were selected on the recommendation of an advisory group made up of community college personnel, local clergy and campus ministers from both states. The invitation was either extended by a regional staff of United Ministries In Higher Education or the local clergy. While the critique has been made that there were no community college presidents present, the persons attending were present with the approval of these presidents, if not their recommendation, except in one instance where contact was made through the college dean. Since the value of the conference to the participants was unknown and because of our desire for this to be seen as a vocational task rather than merely a willingness of the participants to give time to a church project of unknown value, a small honorarium was given to the participants.

As has been noted, two primary goals of the project were:

1) Exploring points of intersection of the community colleges and the churches

2) Providing the participants with insights which would assist them in their full-time vocations.

In order to achieve these goals, along with introducing the participants to each other, a case study approach was used by dividing the participants into two groups of six persons to work on the case studies. A resource person was provided each group, a resource person for theological perspective and a resource person for community college administration. The resource persons were:

Professor Dr. Michael Brick of Teachers College, Columbia University and Director of the Community College Institute of Columbia University.

Professor Dr. Beverly Harrison of Union Theological Seminary.

These two resource people spent a session with each of the two groups. The two different case studies used are attached. These are, on recommendation of the planning committee, real except for change in names and locations. While it was difficult to find actual case studies, it proved a wise decision since it lent realism to the discussion. While only one deals directly with the church, both were chosen to raise questions of values and personal relationships as well as administrative decisions. As one of the participants noted in the evaluation session, the focusing on other problems first made the conversation about issues easier in the beginning. The case studies did stimulate discussion since several times the group decided not to break in order to continue the discussion, and every break time became a plenary session. This pattern of discussion followed the session where the focus shifted from the specific case studies to a discussion of the general issues raised in the case studies regarding the community colleges and the churches.

In these general sessions several issues were raised and discussed. One of the main issues revolved around the question of: "What are the ways in which the public can and ought to be involved in influencing the way in which a community college is run?" It was noted that public influence (and perhaps the church in particular because of its traditional relationship to four-year colleges) could provide a debilitating effect by pressuring for two-year transfer programs rather than the diversified efforts ascribed to the two-year college.

At the same time, it was noted that the trustees or governing boards do not always represent minorities or their views. Greater public participation, including the churches, in the determining of the work of the community college may assume the consideration of minority issues and greater diversification in the community college program. This would assure the right of minorities to services and a move away from majority rule.

This determination in governance raises for the church as an outside public the question: "Can the churches bring understanding to the problem of who controls and shapes the educational processes of the community college?"

Another main issue, raised primarily by the one case study, was, "whether or not the church ought to attempt the priestly and pastoral function by establishing a formal identifiable group or person on the campus?" It was generally felt after the discussion that formal identity on the campus in regard to these functions was not as desirable or as useful as the church might initially assume because of the fluid nature of the campus population and the general commuter population of the students. Instead, returning to the first issue, it was felt that the churches might see their function in terms of involvement with questions of social policy studies and governance. Such involvement could include alliances with other publics and the college personnel in assisting in "deprovincializing" both the colleges and the churches. It was further suggested that rather than being concerned with images and identity on the campus, the churches and colleges need to open communication regarding their concerns, current issues facing both institutions and their purposes.

From this general discussion the college and church personnel from the same community met together to explore whether from their specific situation and point of view there were possible points of intersection of concerns and action for the community college and the churches. They were to report back to the group their specific responses to this question, and if they thought there were not points of intersection, why not, and if they thought there were possible points of intersection, what these were and how they might be implemented to serve the people of the community as well as the colleges and churches. These groups were also invited to share with the total group prior experiences which might shed some insight on the subject of the relation of the churches and community colleges.

The obvious point of these meetings was to lay the groundwork for Phase III (the planning of projects). In reporting out, several things became clear. One, that no one felt prepared to say there were no possible points of intersection, but there were some questions of how these points could be discovered, given the aloofness of either the colleges or the churches, or both to each other. It also became apparent that as each college area reported there was considerable difference in ideas of and community climate effecting the possible points of intersection of the community colleges and the churches. The following is but a partial list of possible areas of concerns and actions raised:

1) The under-staffed and over-worked counselling service of the college might be helped if the clergy could act as adjunct counsellors, (This would require a particular kind of skill on the part of the clergy.)

2) The hostility between loberal college personnel and a conservative community has spilled over into elections and questions of classroom control. Can the church provide resource for improving these relations and the understanding of the educational processes and academic freedom?

3) The concern of colleges and churches for environmental conservation (ecology) may be another point of intersection.

4) The joint concern of the colleges and churches for providing equal opportunity in the area of race suggests another possibility for mutual exploration and dialogue, particularly between the clergy, faculty and administration.

5) The possibility that both the college supporters and church supporters sometime suffer from an "edifice" complex at the cost of focusing on community needs may be another area where both need to explore "decentralization" while living with the dangers of provincialism.

6) The need of the community colleges and the churches to consider a broader area of responsibility to the communities where they are located. These would include social as well as educational responsibilities.

7) One area where the clergy seems indifferent to the colleges is one in which the commuter rush of families as well as students tends to isolate institutions and persons to the growing drug problem. This might be an area of focus for the colleges and the churches along with the community.

8) The development of more relevant courses might be facilitated if the public were to share in the development of the courses. The church and the college might be helpful in the area of mobilizing people to ask for greater relevancy in the education process and thus influence a rather conservative board of control.

9) Is it possible for the churches to assist in bringing the students now in the four-year colleges, who the churches have tended to favor, to understand and relate to the exciting idea of the community colleges?

These are but some of several issues raised by each of the six groups.

The next phase of the project will be the development of specific programs relevant to each of these groups and the providing of resources to implement these programs. As in the final evaluation part of the two-day educational time spent at Greyston Conference Center, several persons remarked: "The real worth of what was done will be determined by whether there is any follow-up to the process begun in the past two days."

The conclusion of the session was spent on evaluation. While there was positive expression for the process of using the case studies and movement from the specific of the case studies to general issues to the specific issues of one's own situation, there was expressed a concern that no student had been involved. The hope was expressed that a project such as this involving students could be tried as well as involving them in the next phases of the existing project.

Appreciation was also expressed that the persons participating were not all established power persons in the community colleges or churches. Regarding persons who attended there was also the suggestion that representatives from other community agencies or groups could participate in such a meeting along with church personnel. It was also noted that no one was present from the city system, and some views were expressed that the city almost needed to have its own experience like this since there is a tendency that no one has problems that compare to the city problems.

Several persons expressed appreciation for what the sessions and resource persons had meant for their own renewal and commitment to their work and the ideals they had when they began working in the community college. One administrator confessed that he had come prepared to keep the church from "bothering" the college. Now he was wondering how to involve the church. Another noted that the next time curricular plans were being made in committee, he hoped that he could have a person from the community and possibly the church share in the discussion of the needs and value to be met and to be communicated by the courses under consideration.

Some expressed surprise that we really came to them looking for answers (questions) and were not prepared to sell them a "bill of goods." All agreed, however, that whether anything happened after this would be the real measure of the worth of the meeting.

There are several specific projects that have been suggested by this meeting:

1) The gathering of a group of persons including students, parents, community college faculty and administrators, representatives of local churches to work on the problem of value education.

2) The calling of other community agencies (public) to meet with the community college and church personnel to discuss, to plan, and to implement projects of community service.

3) The using of this community college-church project as a model for implementing the exploration of points of intersection between the church and the community college.

4) The need for further initial research by the community college and the churches in the area of value education in the training of technicians and personnel entering semi-professional careers.

EJL:erh
February 1971

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY COLLEGE-CHURCH PROJECT ATTENDANCE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	COLLEGE PERSONNEL	CLERGY
North Country Community College	Howard Maat, English Professor & Counsellor	Daniel Partridge
Westchester County Community College	Donald J. Mahoney, Dean of Faculty	Walter Graig
Rockland County Community College	Raymond Rossiter, Chairman, Social Service Department	Harold Norris
Suffolk County Community College	Albert Van Buren, Associate Professor of English	David Young
Hartford Community College	Olivia Dyson, Director of Counselling Center	David King
Mattatuck Community College	Frank Dillane, Professor of Psychology	David Eusden

RESOURCE PERSONS

Dr. Beverly Harrison - Union Theological Seminary

Dr. Michael Brick - Teachers College, Columbia University

STAFF TO PROJECT

Rev. Lee VanBremen - Greater New Britain United Campus Ministry

Rev. Earl Lowell - New York Commission For United Ministries In Higher Education

CASE STUDY #1

George Haley was rather excited. Barely had he received his Doctoral degree when he became Dean of Continuing Education at Buena Vista Community College in Delaware. Now he had just learned that he was to become the President of the college. He could hardly wait to finish the next appointment so he could get home to tell his wife. His next appointment was with a Mrs. Dickerson.

Mrs. Dickerson, who was applying as an instructor of dance in the college is married to a local Episcopal priest, Frank Dickerson. George had met Frank on several occasions around the campus. Retiring President Bernard had introduced George to Frank, noting that Frank had been asked by the Bishop to be available to minister to the students on the campus. Mrs. Dickerson's credentials seemed sound, and George began arrangements for her employment as a dance instructor in the evening division before leaving for home with the good news.

The months of transition were busy and passed quickly. It was only a week before President Bernard would leave and George would become President of Buena Vista Community College. The letter looked innocent enough. It had the format of the college stationery and had come via the campus mail. It was the names and content of the letter that seemed a bit unusual. It bore the names of The Reverend Frank Dickerson and Father O'Brien and the address of a college office. It announced that Father Dickerson and Father O'Brien were the college chaplains and could be reached at their office or by phone at specified hours. The office and phone were campus numbers.

George, aware of the growing questions of Church and State, thought the whole letter to be a bit unusual, particularly since President Bernard had not mentioned that he was providing an office and phone to the two clergymen. While it was a small item in a growing agenda in the final weeks of transition, George did ask President Bernard about the office space and learned that they had received no official clearance but had simply taken over the office of a willing member of the faculty. While President Bernard seemed to quickly dismiss the whole matter by saying he would look into it, George wondered to himself who was to pay for the stationery. He also wondered what these men actually did. Did they counsel students and what was their relation to the counselling office? He had heard faculty room talk that they really had a new and modern view of the campus ministry along with some jokes about chaplains at fraternity orgies and pot parties. George made a mental note that on assuming the presidency he needed to make inquiry into the role of these two men.

It was less than a month after he had assumed the presidency of the college and in the midst of all the administrative burdens of his new office that he was reminded of his mental note regarding the two campus ministers. The Sunday paper had come out with an announcement that the chaplain of Buena Vista Community College would address the monthly meeting of the AAUW on "The Needs of the Community College Student." The article led the reader to believe that the Reverend Dickerson was in the employ of the college.

On Monday morning, George had barely concluded his conversation with Frank Dickerson on when he could meet later in the day when he was called to the phone by the Reverend Norman Cone, President of the Council of Churches. Mr. Cone wanted to know by what means the Episcopal Church and not the Council of Churches had been used when the college hired a chaplain. George quickly explained that the college had not employed Mr. Dickerson and, yes, George would be glad to talk with representatives of the Council of Churches regarding their sending a cooperative worker to the campus.

Case Study #1

The phone was not back in its cradle when George's secretary informed him that Dr. Anderson, head of the general studies division was waiting on another line to speak to him. Dr. Anderson was a member of the ACLU and obviously upset by not only the newspaper announcement connoting employment of a church staff person but the office privileges as well as the general presence of a "religionist" on the campus. George assured Dr. Anderson that as president he was aware of the issue of Church and State and that he was meeting with the Reverend Dickerson to clarify several points later in the day.

In the afternoon, George's meeting with Frank went well, with Frank stating that he understood the need to clarify before he spoke that he was not employed by the college. He further promised he would send a copy of a report of his work at the college as well as an outline of what was the nature of his responsibilities. Frank did suggest that he saw his task as being more than a shepherd to Episcopal students and more as an advocate of the church's values and concerns.

Although a month passed and he received no further word from Frank regarding his work, George did hear that Frank had made clear at the AAUW meeting that his relationship to the college was indirect rather than direct. General campus confusion still remained over the "chaplain's office" and the Council of Churches was still meeting to work out some arrangements for the placing of "their" man at the college when the annual spring play of the drama club was presented. Why George and his wife went to the first night's production of a two-day run he will never know.

It was the first time the play had been produced anywhere. In fact, on the second night the play was to be reviewed by some "New York people" since it had been written by a new and interesting young playwrite. The problem the play presented to George was that in one of the scenes a girl, acting as a baby sitter, does a "strip" to entertain the children. The strip was completely and professionally done, with all the suggestive movements of the downtown burlesque. While George was concerned for freedom of expression, he was also concerned for what such an act would mean to the girl and to college and its need for community support for its educational programs.

After the performance, George asked that Timothy Moore, a young English instructor and director of the paly and drama group, to stop by the house when he had finished at the auditorium. Frank Dickerson arrived with Tim at George's house later that evening. George attempted to share with Tim his concern for both the freedom of expression and his concerns relative to the girl and the community college program and whether there was not an alternative to the strip and suggestive dance. After a rather lengthy conversation, George felt that progress was being made and that an alternative of suggesting the strip from behind a screen was being worked out. It was at this point that Frank Dickerson, who had been sitting silently by, interrupted the conversation:

"Tim, if you modified the action, could you really live with yourself?" Frank inquired. "After all the times I have taken Becky to the burlesque so she would know how to really do the strip, I have to ask you, could you really live with that compromise?"

That seemed to do it. All conversations ended, and Tim said the strip would stay as it was, or no play, no New York review. George pointed out that though he could not let the college sponsor the play for a second night as it was put on the first night, there may be alternatives. If they were going to resist changing the play, he noted that the college was using the auditorium in a local Catholic school and if they wanted to put the play on as an independent group for the reviewer, this was possible. Frank noted that the play was a college production or nothing and that George would have to bear the "guilt of censorship."

The next few days produced a great number of letters and articles in the local papers. Despite the overwhelming support for George's stand, George felt that too many people were supporting him for the wrong reasons. The furor was just subsiding when, as he was in the outer office talking to Dr. Anderson, the Dean of Students, Arthur Cotts, burst in on them.

"Just what are you going to do about Chaplain Dickerson? I just locked in one of the empty classrooms and he is necking with one of our coeds." "Yes," chimed in Dr. Anderson, "what about Dickerson -- the office -- the phone -- and these crazy antics. If he was on my staff, he would not have his contract renewed. What are you going to do about Dickerson?"

CASE STUDY #2

The students were there alright. They were right outside his door. Dean George Douglas, dean of students at Walskill Community College, had heard of a sit-in but this was the first in his office. This was also George's first year in the Dean's Office after directing the guidance department in the local high school. On his desk were two documents, one from the President, one from the leader of the student sit-in.

The letter from the students was a list of demands. Granted they were not as scholastic as the Berkeley demands but they were real to those students outside his door. When Jim Mills, a senior and a veteran, had handed him the demands he said that they were a package.

The demands were:

1) Student and faculty have right to all the parking area.

2) Alcoholic beverages be permitted at college social functions.

3) Beer be served in the Student Union.

4) Student residents in college dormitories be allowed to keep alcoholic beverages in their rooms.

5) Dormitory curfew for women be abolished.

6) That all dormitories be open for guest 24 hours a day.

7) Library hours be extended from 10 p.m. to midnight.

There they sat, the commutors and the dorm students, as unified as Dean Douglas had ever seen them.

The other document was a memo from the President. It contained a copy of the letter and questionnaire the President had sent to all the freshmen's parents regarding alcohol and dormitories and the results of that questionnaire. (See attached sheets.) With the results was the statement that in line with the responses from the parents the President felt that despite student agitation there should be no change in the current policy of the school prohibiting alcohol on campus or at campus events and that dormitory curfews for women residents would not be changed.

Dean Douglas sat wishing that President Gordon was not in Hawaii for the AAJC meeting. The Dean of Instruction, Bill Phillip, as Acting President had earlier informed George by phone that in light of the President's memo the items of alcohol and dormitory regulations were not negotiable. If they were, what did he have to negotiate, for the parents and the community were on one side and the students on the other.

How do you tell a 22 year old veteran of Viet Nam like Jim Mills that he cannot drink in his dormitory after mandating that he live there in order to keep the dormitory budget from running into debt? If you did let the students drink at the college social events, what is your responsibility to all those parents who said they do not want you to permit drinking at these events? As a community college, how do you answer to the demands of the parents and community? The immediate question was outside the door but the long range problem was just as pressing.

The phone rang; it was the press. "What are you going to do?"